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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 004013

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [ECON](#) [EU](#) [RO](#) [TU](#) [NATO](#)

SUBJECT: TURKS DENY GO IT ALONE POLICY IN THE BLACK SEA

REF: A. BUCHAREST 1432

[1](#)B. ANKARA 3953

Classified By: PolMil Counselor Timothy A. Betts for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: An MFA official and a Turkish admiral admitted to us June 30 that RADM Kadir Sagdic's comments on the margins of a Harvard Black Sea Security Conference earlier that month (ref A) were "extreme" and did not reflect GOT policy. They credited his comments to personal views prompted by frustration with Romanian political-level resistance to greater maritime cooperation with Turkey in the Black Sea. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) MFA International Security Affairs DDG Fatih Ceylan agreed to meet PolMilCouns one-on-one on June 30 to discuss statements by Turkish Admiral Kadir Sagdic on Turkey's Black Sea maritime security policy at the June 7-10 Harvard Black Sea Security Conference in Chisinau. At Ceylan's request just prior to the meeting, TNFC/N5 Strategy Chief RADM (LH) Cem Gurdeniz joined as well.

[1](#)3. (C) PolMilCouns informed Ceylan and Gurdeniz of what Sagdic had told US participants on the margins of the Chisinau conference, drawing from ref A, para 2. He noted that this differed from what Ceylan and Gurdeniz had previously explained to us was Turkey's policy and from what Turkish Navy Commander ADM Ornek had told USNAVEUR ADM Ulrich earlier in the week (ref b).

[1](#)4. (C) Ceylan, holding a copy of Sagdic's prepared remarks for the conference, said "this is Turkey's policy," not what Sagdic told our SECI Coordinator. Both he and Gurdeniz thought Sagdic had poorly chosen his words; when he described NATO policies regarding PFP as "dictatorial," he likely meant "declared" or "directed". After an extended discussion, they conceded that his language was "extreme."

[1](#)5. (C) Regarding Turkey's "going it alone," both Gurdeniz and Ceylan said that was not possible. Currently, Turkey's OAE-like Operation Black Sea Harmony (BSH) covers only 45% of the Black Sea. Other littorals must participate to gain complete coverage of the sea. In this regard, they were critical of Romania. Gurdeniz repeated what he had said during the Ornek-Ulrich meeting: Turkey alerts the Romanians when suspect vessels enter Romania's territorial waters, but Bucharest does nothing with the information. They neither shadow the vessels nor report on their destination and cargo. Turkey had invited fellow NATO members Romania and Bulgaria to join BSH before the other littorals in the hope of giving the operation more of a NATO flavor before the others joined. Neither Bucharest nor Sofia indicated any interest, so BSH was opened to other littorals. Now Russia and Ukraine have indicated a desire to join and still no word from the two Allies.

[1](#)6. (C) Ceylan explained that Turkey had worked for two years to convince Russia to join BLACKSEAFOR (BSF). Moscow had been reluctant to place its vessels under the command of others during BLACKSEAFOR activations. The Russians' agreement to do so was a first for the Russian Navy. When they were considering participation in BSH, the information sharing elements concerned them. Finally, the Turks convinced them to join. Throughout this process, the Russians were learning the NATO concepts and vocabulary the Turks use, contributing to the broader Russian-NATO relationship. But while Russia was becoming more comfortable with NATO, it was still wary of the Alliance's intentions. He argued that as Russia became more confident in its relationship with NATO, it would be open to more engagement by the Alliance and regional Allies. He noted Russia's acceptance of foreign observers for the next BSF activation ceremony as a significant step. He predicted that Russia might accept the deployment of foreign observers to participating ships in 2006. This step-by-step approach would eventually lead to Russian acceptance of NATO activities in the Black Sea.

[1](#)7. (C) Gurdeniz added that with 10,000 Russian flagged vessels transiting the Turkish Straits every year together with the threat of Chechen terrorism, Russia's cooperation on maritime security was essential for Turkey. Turkey had no objection to US activities in the Black Sea that conformed with the Montreux Convention, but believed a formal NATO presence would bring to an end Russia's cooperation. This in

turn would increase the risk to shipping through the Straits -- an important international energy corridor that passes through the heart of Istanbul.

18. (C) After Gurdeniz's departure, Ceylan confided that another possible reason for Sagdic's defiant tone was the deep frustration the Turkish Navy felt towards Romania. The navy-to-navy relationship is fine, with the Romanian navy requesting and receiving considerable assistance from their Turkish colleagues in support of Romania's participation in OAE. However, the Turks believe Romania's political leadership is blocking their navy's greater participation in regional Black Sea efforts, instead pressing for NATO to rush into the region.

19. (C) Comment: Sagdic's reported comments do represent Turkish policy regarding the here and now. They do not, however, reflect what both civilian and military officials at all levels tell us in Ankara are Turkey's long-term goals for the region. While the Turks are proud of their creations in the Black Sea -- BSF and BSH -- and want to preserve their leadership role, they also have a genuine desire to keep Russia positively engaged in cooperative maritime security. We are hopeful that the consultations between NATO's Maritime Component Command Naples and the Turkish Navy (ref b) will improve the transparency of BSH and make the Turks' profession of its "NATO affiliation" closer to a reality.  
End comment.

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